

Funding boost to crack down on the Illegal Wildlife Trade

Protected species across the globe including tigers, Asian elephants and chimpanzees have been given a boost today (Friday 22 May) as the government announces £3.4 million for new projects from the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund.

From today, the government is also [inviting new projects to apply for the next round of funding](#).

The Illegal Wildlife Trade is a criminal industry worth more than £17 billion each year threatening wildlife, bringing species to the brink of extinction and causing despair for communities. The [IWT Challenge Fund](#) supports projects around the world that tackle the illegal wildlife trade by strengthening law enforcement, reducing demand for illegally traded wildlife products, and empowering people to shift away from trading illegal wildlife to more sustainable livelihoods.

The latest round of the Challenge Fund will fund important wildlife conservation projects across the globe, including five in Asia, two in Africa and South America respectively and one in Europe.

Projects that will receive funding include:

- combatting jaguar losses in Bolivia by expanding intelligence networks to combat poaching
- protecting pangolins, elephants and chimpanzees along the Nigeria-Cameroon transboundary Green Corridor through improved cooperation between enforcement agencies
- empowering communities in Indonesia to shift away from trading illegal wildlife to more sustainable alternatives
- strengthening law enforcement in protected areas in Guatemala to reduce the poaching of valuable hardwood species and fauna
- supporting more sustainable harvest methods of orchids by rural communities in Nepal to reduce their illegal trade

To date, the Challenge Fund has supported 85 projects to a value of more than £26 million.

International Environment Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

I am delighted to announce this latest boost to our IWT Challenge Fund on the International Day of Biological Diversity. Our fund is driving change to protect illegally trafficked wildlife across the globe.

We are committed to taking global leadership to protect the world's most endangered species. The illegal wildlife trade brings misery

to local communities and holds back development in some of the world's poorest countries, and today marks another milestone in helping to end this vile trade and protect these amazing species for future generations.

Conservation charity [Fauna & Flora International](#) has received funding for two new projects including helping communities in Southern Myanmar to combat the threat of poaching endangered species including tigers, Asian elephants and pangolins.

Joanna Elliott, Senior Director for Conservation Partnerships, Fauna & Flora International, said:

Fauna & Flora International is delighted that two of our wildlife trade projects have been selected by Defra for this round of IWT Challenge Fund support. The UK government funding for our work to combat illegal wildlife trade is helping FFI to deliver real benefits for endangered species and for local people across multiple countries.

The Covid-19 crisis highlights the direct links between nature conservation and human well-being, and FFI is committed to ending illegal wildlife trade, and to addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss and zoonotic disease emergence, notably high-risk wildlife trade, deforestation and unsustainable land-use changes.

This latest move follows the [£220m biodiversity fund](#) announced by the Prime Minister in September dedicated to addressing biodiversity loss, tackling the illegal wildlife trade and alleviating poverty through sustainable development. The UK is investing more than £66 million between 2014 and 2024 to take action to counter the illegal wildlife trade.